

Lone Wolf Club Newsletters

Newsletter #30

Joe Dever is the creator of the bestselling Lone Wolf adventure books and novels. He is the creator and editor of the original Lone Wolf Club Newsletters that were published between 1985–96.

Brian Williams is the main illustrator of the later Lone Wolf Club Newsletters.

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Jonathan Blake – providing better quality scans of artwork taken from the books.

Simon Osborne – creator and maintainer of this document.

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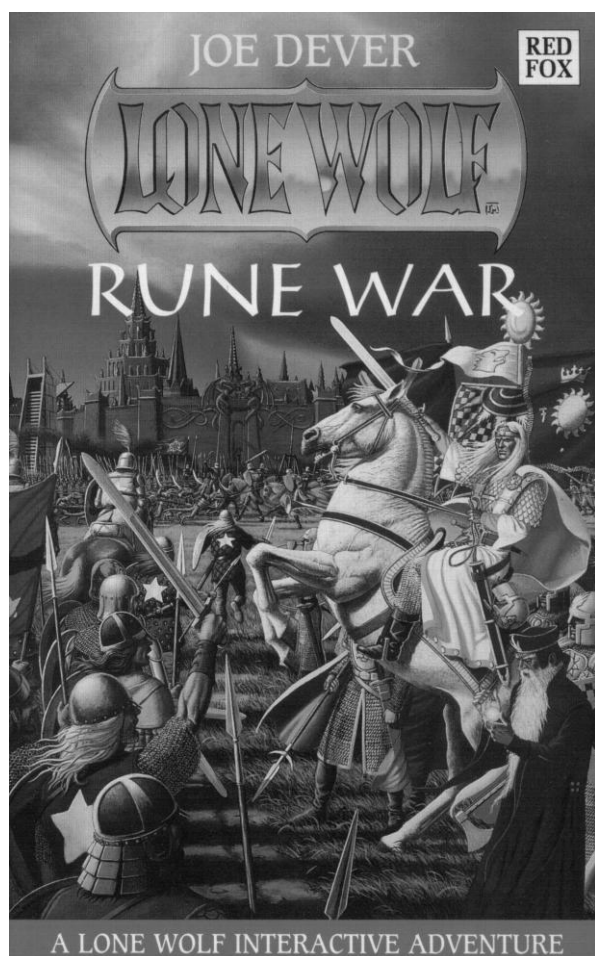
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LONE WOLF Club

Newsletter No. 30



Publication Date
2nd November 1995

Evil Lord Vandyan of Eldenora has unearthed the lost secrets of the rune magics used by Agarash the Damned during his ancient conquest of Magnamund.

Empowered by his discoveries, Vandyan unleashes his armies upon the peaceful realms of the Free Alliance with swift and devastating effect.

Lone Wolf, Supreme Master of the Kai, leads the crusade to defeat Vandyan before all Magnamund succumbs to his tyrannical rule.

In **RUNE WAR**, your task is to infiltrate *Skull-Tor*, Lord Vandyan's stronghold, and destroy the ancient runes from which he draws his supernatural power.

Can you succeed in your vital mission . . . or will you fall victim to the traps and terrors that guard Vandyan's mighty fortress?

Order your signed copies now! See the special Order form on page 10

ADVENTURE AND DUTY

by Jeffrey Cross

Blade Dancer circled his opponent carefully and kept his sword raised. The fight had gone on longer than it should have, and despite his Kai Disciplines, he was beginning to tire. Blade Dancer quickly wiped away the sweat from his eyes with the back of his free hand and switched to a different stance. His foe continued to mirror his movements and wait for a better chance to strike. Blade Dancer knew this man's skill well enough to know he wouldn't be drawn by a feint or lured into making an impatient attack. Speed was not in Blade Dancer's favour, even with his Grand Huntmastery ability he'd barely been able to deflect the last flurry of strokes. The outcome would be determined by skill alone.

An audience had formed and they were hushed in anticipation. Blade Dancer was barely aware of their presence; he was focused on his foe, his eyes and his ever-shifting centre of balance. Blade Dancer stopped; his opponent froze in response. In unison they shifted their weight to the balls of their feet in readiness to spring. *Reach!* The thought flashed through Blade Dancer's mind. *Remember, your height gives you the advantage of reach—use it!* But then his thoughts were scattered by instinct as his foe launched his attack.

Blade Dancer deflected a waist-high swing and riposted at his chest. The swordsman batted aside the thrust and struck again, lower this time, moving in closer to put weight behind the attack. Blade Dancer blocked the thrust squarely upon his longsword and took a few hurried steps backwards, wary that his superior reach would be negated if his foe were to get in too close. Clearly, the swordsman was aware of this. He moved in and Blade Dancer brought his weapon up in a diagonal uppercut slash. But his foe was prepared for this blow and he sidestepped it with feline fluidity. His wicked counterattack came swiftly; it started like a lazy swing but fast transformed into a thrust. Blade Dancer parried the strike, but only just, and he was forced back several paces more.

Blade Dancer judged that this formal fencing was getting him nowhere. He'd been fighting with skill but without fire and flare, and his opponent had had no trouble matching him blow for blow. Perhaps the time had come to be more daring.

His adversary was pressing his attack for all it was worth, trying to force Blade Dancer off

balance. A few of the onlookers were beginning to shout encouragement, but the young Kai Lord was concentrating entirely upon the fight and he couldn't tell for whom they were cheering. For several more attacks Blade Dancer parried the blows successfully, yet he was steadily losing ground. Sweat trickled into his eyes and he jerked his head to the side to clear his stinging vision. Blade Dancer drew deeply upon his Kai reserves and tried to mask his fatigue from his determined adversary.

Blade Dancer held his foe with his steady gaze and took his chance. After receiving four scything blows in quick succession, he guessed that his enemy was about to make a thrust. If he didn't . . . it would all be over. As the swordsman began his attack, Blade Dancer halted his steady retreat and lunged forwards, twisting his body as he advanced, driving his sword upwards.

The swordsman's thrust skewered the air where, had he not twisted his torso aside, his heart would have been. Blade Dancer's sword struck his enemy's elbow. There was a crack, a yelp of pain, and his sword clattered to the ground. Blade Dancer's sword came to rest beside his opponent's neck.

The watching audience applauded and roared with approval. A smiling Blade Dancer stepped back, faced the crowd, and essayed a few strokes in the air that ended with a dramatic pose. The onlookers hooted with delight. Blade Dancer relaxed and casually picked up the fallen wooden practice sword which he handed, hilt first, to his friend.

"I think you dropped this," he said, trying hard to contain a grin that threatened to split his face in two. Iron Leaf, cradling his bruised elbow, took the practice sword with a sour look on his reddening face.

"You have no right to be so lucky," Iron Leaf grumbled under his breath, but as he raised the wooden blade he began to smile.

"Not luck, my friend. It was all Grand Weaponmastery." Blade Dancer looked over his shoulder at a group of his Magnakai students who were chanting his name in unison. Beyond them he caught sight of a figure standing at the edge of the practice field. His features were indistinct, but his aura of his power was unmistakable.

Supreme Master Lone Wolf stood there, clapping his hands appreciatively, a wry smile playing upon his lips. He was shaking his head ever so slowly and Blade Dancer, his vision now magnified, knew at once the message that Lone Wolf's look conveyed. The manoeuvre was effective in this instance, but brash. In a real fight the young Grand Master would have been seriously wounded, probably killed. Yet the move had paid off, and so Blade Dancer met his mentor's steely gaze and saluted crisply. The younger students finally became aware of their leader's presence and hurriedly they copied Blade Dancer's salute. Lone Wolf returned their salute and, as he turned to leave the training park, the students hurried away to resume their duties.

"I wonder what Lone Wolf thought of our match?" Blade Dancer mused aloud as he and his fellow Grand Master returned the sparring equipment to the armoury. "He's watched us practice many times, but I think I would have fought differently if I had known that he was watching. I know for sure I wouldn't have tried that last feint."

"That's probably why he didn't announce his presence," replied Iron Leaf, "so he could observe our individual styles without his direct influence. I think we're a bit self-conscious under his gaze. But I'm surprised he took the time to watch us this day, what with the preparations and all . . ."

"So am I. After all, returning the Moonstone is no small matter." Blade Dancer snorted. "Then again, for Lone Wolf it's probably just business as usual."

As they left the armoury and returned to the afternoon sunlight, Iron Leaf looked up at his friend with amusement. "I'd hardly call returning to its creators the object from which all time is measured 'business as usual'."

"But look at what he's done already! Destroyed the Darklords, several in personal combat, survived in the harshest regions of Magnamund, travelled to the Plane of Darkness—the Dark God's domain! Compared to all that, this mission is routine. I know how crucial it is, and what would happen if the Moonstone were stolen by evil agents en route, but our Supreme Master has faced those odds before and he has triumphed every time. He is larger than life itself!"

Iron Leaf noted the reverence in his friend's voice. Being two of the highest-ranking Kai Lords in the New Order, they often personally trained with Lone Wolf. It was difficult not to be overwhelmed when in his company.

"There are still adventures out there, don't you

worry. Our lives are never going to be boring." He thumped Blade Dancer's shoulder before heading off for his next training session.

Blade Dancer had his own duties but he kept thinking about Iron Leaf's last remark. His friend knew what lay in his spirit. Adventures. Glory. Even preparing for sleep he couldn't clear his mind of the tales he'd heard told of Lone Wolf's exploits. At such times, Blade Dancer often played his lyre to ease his mind, but instead of a soft ballad, this night he found himself playing an epic recital about Sun Eagle. Adventure, he thought, as he put the lyre back into its ornate rosewood case, what a selfish thing to crave. Running around Magnamund doing death-defying feats just so that my name will be committed to song and spoken in the same breath as Sun Eagle and Lone Wolf. Getting a reputation and impressing people, bah! as if that's what being a Kai Lord is all about. I should be honoured just to be where I am now. Twenty years of age and already a Kai Grand Master. I have a bigger responsibility to train the initiates and help maintain the strength of the Kai. We're not so numerous that a Grand Master can just lake off in search of adventure when the whim takes him. Fulfilling my duties here will have to be enough.

Blade Dancer blew out the candle and flopped out upon his bed. He stared at the ceiling for some time, willing himself to be calm. It will just have to be. Shortly after waking up the next morning there was a knock at Blade Dancer's door. Upon answering it, he found Saber Fox standing at attention.

"Grand Master, our liege Lone Wolf wishes to see you in the Vault of the Sun . . . immediately."

Blade Dancer swallowed hard and for a few seconds he felt strangely faint. Then he regained his composure. "Give me a moment," he said, and closed the door. Hurriedly he dressed in his tunic and cloak, and all the while his heartbeat pounded loudly in his ears.

The Vault of the Sun!? Lone Wolf rarely summons his Kai to the vault. Only missions and quests of the utmost importance are discussed there. I wonder if this has anything to do with the Moonstone? By Ishir! It must be. Iron Leaf was right after all. Our lives are never going to be boring!



The Kai Konnection



The Kai Konnection is a regular feature of the Lone Wolf Club Newsletter for those of you who would like to make new friends by post.



Name: DEREK CURTIS Age: 21
Address: England
Hobbies: Reading, writing, drawing, model painting & weightlifting.
Would like a pen-pal, male or female, who is imaginative and is interested in writing a book.



Name: BEN SMITH Age: 9
Address: England
Hobbies: Lone Wolf books, tennis, football, writing, TV & video games.
Would like a male pen-pal, with similar interests, about the same age, too. Please send photo & Kai rank.



Name: ALISON WILKES Age: 12
Address: England
Hobbies: Adventure gamebooks, computers, rock music, rollerblading, fantasy & sci-fi.
Would like a pen-pal, boy or girl, any age, similar interests, any country.



Name: JEREMY J MYERS Age: 21
Address: USA
Hobbies: Lone Wolf, biking, reading, canoeing, camping, making medieval replica weapons, ultimate Frisbee.
Would like a pen-pal (male or female), any nationality, with similar interests. Age 15+



Kai Konnection Form:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

..... ZIP / POST CODE AGE

YOUR
HOBBIES / INTERESTS

TYPE OF PEN-PAL YOU WOULD LIKE

Fill in this form in BLOCK CAPITALS please, and send it to: LONE WOLF CLUB (KK),
39 Corfe Way, Broadstone, Dorset, BH18 9ND (UK)

YES! I would like to become a LONE WOLF pen-pal. Please feature me in the next newsletter (space permitting).

News from the Monastery

Firstly, we would like to offer **apologies on behalf of Red Fox** for the delayed release of *Lone Wolf 23: Mydnight's Hero*. Although scheduled for publication on May 4th, the first UK printing of this book had to be withdrawn shortly before this date due to the number of serious production errors that it contained. The correct and complete edition was subsequently released in August. Written notification of the problem was sent to all club members who pre-ordered LW23, and we would like to thank you all for your patient support whilst the problem was rectified.

During the summer of 1995, Joe Dever completed work on the manuscript of **Lone Wolf 25: Trail of the Wolf**. Brian Williams has recently delivered the cover art (stunning!) and internal illustrations for this title, and first UK publication is scheduled for the end April 1996. Further details about Trail of the Wolf will feature in the next Club Newsletter.

Also featuring in the next newsletter will be a specially extended **Gwynian's Forum** feature in which we shall be answering some of the most frequently asked questions about Lone Wolf and the World of Magnamund. If you have questions about any aspects of the series that you'd like answered in print, now is the time to send them in. (Please send your questions to Lone Wolf Club Secretary, Gwynian's Special Forum, 39 Corfe Way, Broadstone, Dorset, BH18 9ND England).

Release of the first edition of the **Lone Wolf Fantasy Battle** Rules system (first mentioned in Newsletter No. 26) has been postponed until next year. LWFB is currently undergoing extensive playtesting and a wide supporting range of miniature figurines are being prepared by Matchlock Miniatures. We will keep you informed of further developments in future Club Newsletters.

Joe Dever will be attending the **1996 European GenCon** organized by TSR (UK) Ltd., as a Guest of Honour. Following 1995's sell-out success (over 2,200 attendees), this mega-gaming event has been moved to bigger and better facilities. The 1996 convention will

take place at Loughborough University in Leicester on Sept. 5th-Sept. 8th. Those of you who are interested in attending are advised to book early. Over 2,500 delegates are expected next year. Further details can be obtained from Denise Lyne at TSR Ltd., 120 Cherry End, Cherry Hinton, Cambs., CB1 3LB (Tel: 01223 212517).

Joe Dever and John Grant have announced that they shall be taking a break from writing further titles in the **Legends of Lone Wolf** series during 1996. Both authors are contractually committed to other projects that will be keeping them very busy next year. Joe will be working on further Lone Wolf New Order adventures, the Lone Wolf Fantasy Battle system, and a games project for the Sony Playstation, and John has been commissioned to work with friend and fellow-author John Clute on the second edition of the definitive Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction (both the printed and CD-ROM versions).

Back issues of the following Club Newsletters are available (Nos. 19-29) at £1.50 (UK), \$4.00 (US), £2.25 (O/seas) each. As usual, UK £ cheques & POs should be made payable to the Lone Wolf Club; US \$ checks & POs should be made payable to Joe Dever. Please send your orders to the Club and mark your envelope 'Newsletter Backorders'.

Newsletter subscriptions—clarification. Please note that your present subscription fee covers you for the cost of five Club Newsletters, and not just for the period of one calendar year (as implied in some of the membership enrolment forms). Currently we are producing an average of 3-4 newsletters per year.

Copies of the second Legends of **Lone Wolf Audiobook** (*The Dark Door Opens*) are still available to club members, priced at only £5.50 each (US \$15—airmail) inc. P&P. Orders should be sent to Senator Publications, PO Box 2153, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 0AB. UK £ cheques & POs should be made payable to Senator Publications; US \$ checks & POs should be made payable to Joe Dever. Please allow 14 days for delivery.



LWC Newsletter No. 29 COMPETITION RESULTS

LWC Newsletter No.29 'Buccaneers of Shadaki' Competition

The Answers

1. Acarya 2. Sesketera was holding her friends hostage 3. 100 4. *The Azan* 5. Kastrow's Door 6. The overland route from Masama to Kitaezi 7. Guanza 8. Junkyard of the Ralzuha 9. Spike Street, in Pforodon. 10. A Crown & a Star 11. Its gaming tables 12. Jublazz Khyr 13. MS 5054 14. He was studying at the workshops of a famous silversmith 15. Captain Leonghi 16. River Ocka 17. Siyenese 18. Silk 19. Hami 20. 120

The Winner

The first correct entry drawn at random from all entries received by 21st August '95 was sent in by:

Jonathan Spink (15) of Debenham, Suffolk (UK).

Congratulations to Jonathan who won a **Panasonic RQ-P202 Personal Stereo**.

Runners-up:

Sam Garfield (12) of Worcester.

Sean Thomas (11) of Long Sutton.

Vince Malchek (16) of Modesto, CA (USA).

Congratulations to Sam, Sean, and Vince who each won signed copies of *Lone Wolf 23: Mydnight's Hero*.

ALOHA!

Darrell Wong recently discovered the World of Magnamund whilst browsing the shelves of his school library in Pearl City, Hawaii. Having since completed the first twelve adventures, he's a self-confessed Lone Wolf addict who is just about to embark upon the Grand Master series. In an open letter to Gwynian the Sage, he reveals the tricks and techniques he used to triumph against all the odds. Were his methods fair or foul, or faintly familiar? We'll let you be the judge of that...

I've spent many enjoyable hours in the first 12 adventures of the Lone Wolf series, and let me tell you... this is a real winner! First off, how I got to know the series. I was in the library, see... and then, I believe it was #4 I saw, I read it... and from there I was hooked. Hey, whaddya expect?! I soon found out that it was indeed a series, meaning that you're not supposed to go through #4 before finishing 1-3. Of course, the library didn't have 'em. And I'm sure that some players figured they'd take a short cut (you know—cheat!) and start later on, instead of slugging it out from Flight from the Dark. How to prevent this, I asked. Well, the perfect answer is already there—the Kai Disciplines. These skills, without which staying alive becomes real difficult (and in a few instances down-right impossible), start off few in number. Out of 10 (quite an impressive range I must add) you begin with 5. Additional skills can be gained only by... that's right, you guessed it... completing adventures. Shrewd.

Not only that, but some items... some very powerful, very important, very useful items... are one-of-a-kind treasures that can only be obtained in one of the twelve volumes. Skip those books and you'll never get your hands on those items.

I, of course, am not into losing out on treasures or special skills, so I started where everyone would start: the beginning. Darklords massacre the Kai; Giaks and Drakkarim swarm everywhere, and a fresh-out-of-the-box Kai initiate called Silent Wolf has to find his way to Holmgard all alone.

Since this was the first volume, of course, it was also the easiest. For the most part I wasn't in too much danger. Of course, I was swift and resourceful, and knew which 'instant-unavoidable-deathtraps' to avoid. I got to Holmgard alive and, well, easily.

From there it was straight into part 2—off to Durenor to get the super-powerful Sommerswerd, the Only-Weapon-That-Can-Slay-A-Darklord (except an Orb of Death, or a Darklord Weapon, or a Zejar-dulaga, that is). It was an ordeal and I faced adversity at almost every step, almost as if my enemies KNEW I'd be damn near invincible once I obtained the sun-sword. I succeeded and after a few routine dispatchings of Vonotar's undead rabble, I made a triumphant return, blasted Zagarna into a Darksmudge, and closed the book on a great and successful adventure.

With Sommerswerd glowing in hand, winning battles was no sweat, and all I had to do was choose the right paths and avoid those pesky unavoidable deathtrap situations.

Capturing Vonotar and saving Madelon went without a hitch. With four adventures under my belt, all that remained was to sign the peace treaty with Vassagonia and collect that last Discipline hassle-free. Of course, it wasn't that easy. Vassagonia had secretly struck an alliance with the Darklords and its new Zakhan was promised the Orb of



Death in exchange for his help in exterminating yours truly...AND the Book of the Magnakai! You know, I wondered just what Lone Wolf was going to do when he reached the rank of Kai Master. I mean, he

couldn't just saunter off into the sunset with most of the Darklords still alive and kicking. And those 10 skills, although nothing to sneeze at, were no way sufficient to allow him to sneak into Helgedad and destroy Gnaag. (And granted, five volumes is pretty short for a saga). Thus the Magnakai Disciplines, the quest of the Magnakai, and the Lorestones of Nyxator. That began phase 2, and once again I found myself at the bottom of the ladder, working my way up towards Grand Mastery. The first Lorestone lay in a crypt underneath the main citadel of Tekaro. After navigating a treacherous sewer system (instant unavoidable deathtrap city here!), I iced the ultra-tricky Dakomyd and got the first stone. From there it was on to Kazan-Oud, then the Danarg, then Tahou (leaving the Sommerswerd behind so that I could defeat Zakhan Kimah with the Dagger of Vashna... trust me, I'm no fan of nail-bitingly close combats), and then Torgar for the final 3. After navigating the Daziam and getting the last Lorestone, I was at the peak of my power and couldn't be denied. I battled all the way to the Slavemaster, and once in Helgedad, made it quickly to the Tower of the Damned where Archlord Gnaag was to make his last desperate stand. There, after all the battles, all the danger, all the crises and intrigue, and all those pesky instant-unavoidable-deathtraps, I pulled out Old Betsy. And Gnaag crumbled like a cookie. Bit of an anticlimax, but I guess I'd earned the victory after all I'd been through. The rest was academic. Pull the pin on the Crystal Explosive, wedge it under the Transfusor, skedaddle for the hills and watch the fireworks as the entire wicked city was turned into a giant landfill site. Darklords perish; armies get tetchy; allies seize the moment and counterstrike to smash the enemy; lands are freed and the evil Darklords are consigned to a footnote in Magnamund's history books. That is, until book # 13.

I noticed a lot of common threads running throughout the course of the first 12 adventures and I wonder how many

Lone Wolf can never sit back and take things easy. In *Flight from the Dark*, the Darklord minions are out for his blood and he has to run, run, and run a bit more until he makes it to the capital. In *Fire on the Water*, Holmgard has strength to stand against the enemy for only forty days. *Caverns of Kalte* has the approach of the winter pack ice. In *Chasm of Doom*, Lone Wolf has to get to the Temple of Maakengorge before the full moon does. And although *Shadow on the Sand* started at a leisurely pace, once the truth about the Book becomes known, it's a flat-out race to the Temple of the Majhan and don't spare the horses! In the first of the Magnakai adventures things slow down a bit, but still there is an underlying sense of urgency (get the stones before the Darklords reach Holmgard and don't delay!). In the *Dungeons of Torgar*, the three remaining Lorestones are about to be destroyed by Nadziranim magic. And the final two books showcase the Darklord conquest...meaning that Lone Wolf has very little time in which to gain the final victory.

Why the rush? I mean, it's a gameBOOK, not a computer game (where time is easier to measure). As a matter of fact, not too many computer RPGs have such pressing time limits; some players take weeks (months!) to finish even the most simple quests. It can take upwards of a year to gain the final victory, maybe several years (if you're still running an obsolete 286 or 386 PC), and part of the challenge is finding out what the heck that final victory is supposed to be!

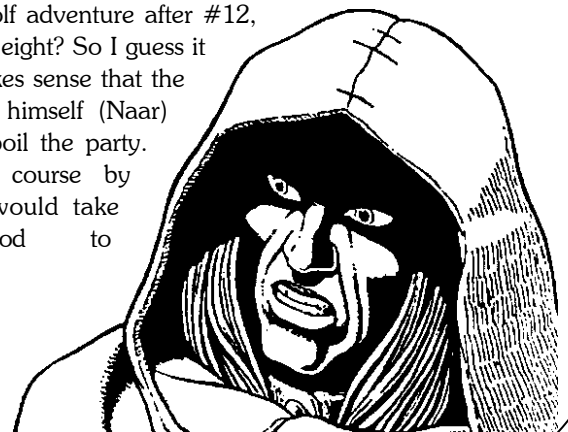
Next up, it's never possible to have all the Disciplines, Kai or Magnakai. At the end of *Shadow on the Sand*, Lone Wolf is already trained to gain the three Magnakai Disciplines. None of the basic Kai Disciplines are a factor in the Magnakai series. (Granted, he has them, but they never have any significant importance.) Going into *The Masters of Darkness*, he has 9 Magnakai Disciplines. In other words, no matter how early you start, Lone Wolf never has a full plate. Why is this? I'm aware that learning to get by without builds character, and making tough choices is an integral part of any good adventure... but come on! Steering clear of the instant-unavoidable-deathtraps is enough when it comes to hard decision making. And toughing it out has its rewards. Be honest, there are SOME adventurers who'd like to go through ONE adventure fully loaded and at the head of the division.

In the preview to each adventure, it boldly states that if this is your first Lone Wolf adventure, choose your skills carefully, because the right choice of Disciplines will allow anyone to survive, regardless of how weak their initial COMBAT SKILL and ENDURANCE scores. This is true... providing your *Random Number Table* consists entirely of 9s and 0s. I really don't see any other way how a player with a base COMBAT SKILL of 10 is going to avoid getting blasted into atoms by Zakhan Kimah. Granted, winning battles isn't everything. Not getting killed outside of battle by accidents, stray archer fire, close explosions, falls, or rampaging herds of beasts that appear out of nowhere) counts for a lot, too. And for that, you need Disciplines. Otherwise, it's up to the roll of a 10-sided dice...

or rather, the fall of your pencil. As the saying goes: Hit nine and you'll be fine, hit zero and away you'll go. (9 is the equivalent of a critical success in the Lone Wolf series; in battle, 0 amounts to sustaining a critical hit.) And let us not forget those situations where Lone Wolf needs a certain RANK to circumvent problems. Yes, it's possible to win every Lone Wolf adventure with CS10 and EP20 and it's possible to complete the *Masters of Darkness* and triumph without having completed any previous Lone Wolf books. It is also possible for a baseball team to go undefeated for an entire season, or for the player with the worst score in the final round of a golf tournament to win it. But these are both very long shots indeed. For those who like better odds, being honest and winning the adventures one-by-one with maxed-out stats is the way to go! Hey, I had no intention of losing to that repugnant Chaos-master in the Daziam after having got so far!

With this in mind, there's something I've not been able to figure out. In *Shadow on the Sand*, what's the run-of-the-mill player's incentive for completing it? Since Lone Wolf becomes a Kai Master regardless of however many Disciplines he has once he's got the Book, and there ain't any one-of-a-kind special items to be had. (Hey, don't worry...I finished it all the same.) Let's recap... there's the Oede Herb. And some keys and other trinkets, including a Silver Mace (obtainable also in #6), and if you've been lugging that Blue Stone Triangle with you ever since the trip to Kalte then you finally get to put it to good use. And that's it. But never mind, I prefer not dwell on what Lone Wolf and his trinkets can do; I prefer to look back at what he (I) did. Escaped countless deathtraps by guile and stealth, rescued people, slew terrifying enemies, and never let anyone down—not even the humblest slave or prisoner. He secured the Kai legacy by recovering the Book of the Magnakai and went on to destroy the Darklords. Vonotar is dead. Zakhan Kimah, the Vassagonian warmonger and Darklord ally is also dead. The Drakkarim, Giaks, and Nadziranim have been broken and their remnants scattered across the desolation of the Darklands. The dead of Maakengorge did not rise. Kazan-Oud, the pit of evil, lies in ruins. Lord Paido is safe. The Chaos-master, scourge of the Daziam, has been destroyed. The New Order of the Kai is prospering and growing stronger with every passing year. Sommerlund has fully recovered from the war against the Darklords. What is there left? In the battle between Good and Evil, Evil got slammed to another planet. And any die-hard stragglers of the evil path are no longer any match for Lone Wolf's awesome skills. How can there be another Lone Wolf adventure after #12,

let alone eight? So I guess it only makes sense that the evil one himself (Naar) would spoil the party. And of course by now it would take a God to provide



any real danger / challenge to Lone Wolf. It seems to me that the Darklords were just the supporting band; now the main act is getting ready to occupy the stage that is Magnamund.

And about that Crystal Star Pendant...um, look, I know that it's a one-of-a-kind item, obtained in the very first book (and only if you have Sixth Sense), but you know, ah... Banedon is already pretty firmly established as an ally of Lone Wolf. So what purpose does it serve? (I'm hanging on to it because I've this nagging suspicion that it's going to be crucial in adventure #20!)

So, for me it's off to Ruel to destroy a plague virus that threatens to render all of the previous victories meaningless. Of course I'm not going to stand for that. Challenge accepted!!!

Before I go, perhaps you could answer me this question—Which is the greater danger...the enemies you fight or the enemies that can kill without even the opportunity for a fight?

After 12 gruelling books, the verdict is in: the enemies that kill instantly, without opportunity... by a mile! In the course of the first 12 books, just one of the battles was a real nail-biter: Vonotar the Traitor. And that was because I didn't have the Sommerswerd (I'll explain later) and was down to just 10 ENDURANCE points after defeating the condemned criminals and taking that damned blast of fire in the chest! But for the most part it was SLASH, HACK, SEND 'EM BACK. I had the Sommerswerd, I had a mean Mindblast, I had Weaponskill and Weaponmastery, I had Special Defences and that means I had majorly positive *Combat Ratios*. These numbers, going as high as +31, were almost always +11 or higher, which kept those enemy bodies pilin' up. And I even avoided battles that would have accomplished little or nothing, and there were a few (like the flood of giant rats in Castle Death). Which is why I wonder about that Psi-surge. At the expense of 2 ENDURANCE points you get 4 extra COMBAT SKILL points, i.e., you use the table column two to the right. Now, I've never really had to use it, because so many of my battles were mismatches, and against the real monsters like the Chaosmaster, how much is the column two to the right going to help if you lose an extra 2 ENDURANCE points each round?



About the only instance Psi-surge would be of any real help is against an enemy with very high COMBAT SKILL and very low ENDURANCE, who is not immune to it. Thankfully, Vonotar was my last serious threat.

Here's the Disciplines I chose for each of the twelve adventures, and why. I wonder how that matches with other Lone Wolf players?

#1: Healing, Sixth Sense, Hunting, Animal Kinship, Weaponskill (Sword). Healing is an absolute must (no over-reliance on Laumspur or sleep for me), as was Sixth Sense. Since there are only a few good opportunities to hunt for food in the first five adventures, I had to take it while it was good for something. Animal Kinship was handy to avoid an unwanted confrontation. For the last I aimed for a CS boost and took Weaponskill; I got lucky and landed a 5 for sword, very useful for the rest of the basic Kai series.

#2: Mindblast. Since I already had Sixth Sense to unlock the powers of the Sommerswerd (it'd be a catastrophe to lose out on 8 CS points and double-damage vs. undead) and Animal Kinship to avoid getting strangled by a Helghast, I went for that little extra advantage in battle. None of the other skills really came into play here.

#3: Tracking. A real boost in getting to Vonotar's ice-fortress with the minimum of hassle.

#4: Camouflage. With the choices now running out, this seemed much more practical than Mindshield (no enemy with any Mindforce to speak of), or Mind over Matter (no real help).

#5: Mindshield. This is the only adventure of the first five that where Mindshield is really useful.

#6: Weaponmastery with Sword, Dagger & Bow, Huntmastery, Curing. With just 3 Magnakai Disciplines to kick off with, as well as Lore-circles to complete, things can get really tricky. I wanted to have the right MDs to survive, but I didn't want to sacrifice valuable CS and EP bonuses either. Briefly, I considered going for the Spirit Lore-circle straight away, but soon scotched that idea. It would take too much time, I'd face all manner of trouble, and those psychic Disciplines were not much help in the early part of the Magnakai quest anyway. I took Weaponmastery with both special weapons in mind (Sommerswerd & Dagger of Vashna), plus bow, which was a great help (I did win the Silver Bow of Duadon). Huntmastery was very, very useful, all the way from #6 to #12, and Curing was just plain VITAL, especially in identifying some helpful plants. I'm glad I had it in the taxidermist's shop, too.

#7: Animal Control. Yes, I was hot to complete the Lore-circle of Light, but I also needed to control the bestial terrors faced inside and outside Kazan-Oud.

#8: Divination. No real pressing needs, so I began to shoot for The Spirit. Divination was an invaluable asset, especially in the final adventure.

#9: Psi-surge. Limited use, of course, especially since I was pretty well-stocked, but still good to have against enemies immune to Mindblast. It proved instrumental in escaping from that prison. (As for Zakhan Kimah... read on.)

#10: Nexus. It was either this or Psi-screen, and the latter

was no help here... besides, I had a tough locked door to get through. Both skills were vital in the next adventure. The lost ENDURANCE that Nexus would have saved in previous adventures was negligible.

#11: Psi-screen. Completing the Circle of the Spirit at last, and gaining a much-needed defence against the intensely psychic supernatural terrors in abundance. Those 3 extra CS and EPs against the Villains and Vonotar were a lifesaver!

#12: Pathsmanship. Neither of the two remaining Disciplines were very important in the final adventure, so this was a judgement call. Since the situation in which Invisibility could help could be surmounted by other means, I took Pathsmanship.

All right, confession time now. I didn't use any of the *Random Number Tables*. Instead, I printed out my own numbers, rows of 0s through 9s. I started with a fresh one for each new adventure. I didn't, however, cross out any numbers for COMBAT SKILL and ENDURANCE. I just automatically assumed nines for both. I did the same for the number of Gold Crowns I got at the start of each adventure. I had to be fair of course. There's no credit to be had for beating 12 or 120 adventures if you can pick any damn numbers you want. With the lines, I had to get every number at least once before starting a new line. So, assuming that the *Random Number Table* really was random, a player using it would hit each number about as many times as I did. Fair enough. Why'd I do it? Let's put it this way: I don't like important things to be left to chance. (And I used the same line for every number I picked, so quit your smirking wise guy!)

GWYNIAN'S QUESTIONS

Darrell, why did you decide that your starting COMBAT SKILL and ENDURANCE were 19 and 29 respectively? Couldn't you just pick the numbers you wanted from a line?

I could, but there's only one nine in a line of numbers, so I'd have to take an eight or less on one of them. That I could never do. It would work out even worse in the Grey Star series, what with WILLPOWER and all.

But, you know, isn't that like... cheating?

Not at all. It's possible for a player using the "fair" *Random Number Table* to hit two nines. Therefore, CS 19 and EP 29 are possible, and hence, not cheating. Simple, huh?

Why was it so important to you to be that powerful?

Hey, if you want to try to make it through twelve adventures at 10 and 20, be my guest. The fact is that many battles are downright unwinnable without decent scores, and I don't care what you read in the Kai Wisdom section. Some battles and injuries are just plain unavoidable, and if your E hits E (pretty good metaphor, eh!), then it's mission over, kiddo. By the time you battle Zakhan Kimah, if you haven't got pretty big numbers in those two pencil drops (plus plenty of tools to help you), you'll be facing a *Combat Ratio* on the wrong side of -10 and about 45 ENDURANCE Points to hack off. Now, if you don't have the aforementioned RNT with the big 9 and 0, your chances are pretty much zippo... meaning that either



Kimah wins and the Darklords conquer Tahou (and later, after building the Transfusor, the whole damn shooting match), OR you have to go all the way back to book #1 and start again. Try that, and then let's see how "fair" it feels, wise guy!

Okay, what about those Gold Crowns? Why was it so important for you to get 19 or more for each adventure?

You can't buy if you can't pay, kiddo. Matter o'fact, if you didn't complete *Flight from the Dark* you gotta gamble in the Ragadorn gameroom just to have enough money to make it to the village alive on the carriage route. Actually, money isn't really a pressing concern from then on. You don't have to spend a thing in book 3 or 4, from 5 to 10 most of your purchases will be on similar stuff—tolls, replacement weapons, meals, bribes, rooms for the night, etc. Crowns aren't legal tender in the Daziarn, and by 12, well, no purchases necessary. But still, it's great to take a full Belt Pouch back to the monastery and watch those Crowns pile up. As they say in Ragadorn—*You can be too thin, but you can never be too wealthy.*

I looked at your 'Combats' pages, and noticed that an unusual number of them were on the plus end. WAY on the plus end! How did you feel getting so many easy victories?

Wonderful! There are few things more satisfying in the series than dispatching enemies by the truckload in one or two rounds apiece, then healing what little damage received right away. Give those bad 'n' nasty evildoers something to be really scared about. Now, I didn't just rush into battle at every chance. In fact, I avoided spurious battles at every opportunity. By spurious I mean those in which I would gain nothing from winning, or when it was readily possible to take out the foe without a fight to the death. But still, it was great being able to win at all. "If you know your enemy and yourself, you need not fear the outcome of 100 battles." Having a formidable CS helps too. As you can see, I only had a negative *Combat Ratio* a few times (and the first one, a Burrowcrawler, was a total wimp). And that's just fine by me. I don't like working with negative numbers... heck, the other challenges are enough of a pain as it is. Let the valorous morons (yes, morons... I'm not in the habit of mincing my words) have the 'honour' of winning against overwhelming odds. I say power is good, winning is good, and being in good shape for the next encounter ain't so bad either!

Um, look. I know that it is possible to hoard stuff at the Kai Monastery. And, yes, I know that you return there after each episode. But it's only supposed to be what you have in excess of the maximum allowed, n'est pas?

What are you getting at? If it's possible to keep EXTRA items at the monastery, it follows that it's possible to keep ANY NUMBER of extra items there. And if it's possible to leave them there, then it follows that it's just as possible to PICK THEM UP again!

I looked at your Special Items list for The Cauldron of Fear, and I can't help noticing that you didn't bring the Sommerswerd. And on Combats, it didn't show a final battle against Zakhan Kimah, meaning that you must have thrown the Dagger of Vashna and hit him. So I am wondering... were you told about the Sommerswerd, and how it could be construed as a handicap in the Zakhan Kimah combat?

Okay, spit it out. "CHEATER!" There, feel better now?! Okay, maybe someone did tell me that fighting Zakhan Kimah with the Sommerswerd would jack up his CS by 12, meaning I'd lose 4 points against an enemy immune to all psychics, and with 50 ENDURANCE to boot... and wouldn't you just like to know, eh? But hey, it's not like I got a free lunch or anything. After all, the Sommerswerd is worth 8 CS points, so I gave up 8 against every other enemy in book #9. Anyway, if you have the Dagger of Vashna, would YOU want to go toe-to-toe in a battle that's against you at best, and way, way against you at worst, when you can just fling that dagger into his heart and have done with it? With the real *Random Number Table*, now!

For the most part, you pretty much play it by the book. However, you take automatic 9s for CS, EP, and Gold Crowns, you leave behind whatever items

you want from 5-12, and you don't use the RNT. Why's that?

Hey, don't knock it...just imagine if I fought with two weapons and a shield at the same time! I actually tried that once, but I came to my senses. Fact is, I don't have 'honour' (whatever that is), and I don't dive headlong into an adventure unless I know I can win it. Adventures aren't very enjoyable if you die a thousand deaths. But at the same time, everything I do is reasonable; I only fight with one weapon and a shield, I don't strap on two waistcoats, and I don't double the Weaponskill or Weaponmastery bonus if I have two weapons. So I think I've made a good compromise.

It's great that you were able to finish all twelve adventures. Much kudos. But what we're all dying to know is... did you know which decisions to make, and when to make them? Because, looking at your Combats sheets etc., it seems you deliberately avoided bad situations. Did you know in advance of these bad situations, because it certainly looks like it and so far you've said nothing about luck?

Okay, you got me. I scanned each and every adventure to find out where the instant-unavoidable-deathtraps were, and I took great care NOT to run into any of them. I did it because if I did get killed, I'd have to start over at book #1 (and I've other things to do...like the Grand Master series, OK!).

If you'd like to write to Darrell, perhaps to impart a few useful tips of your own about the Grand Master series adventures, he can be reached at the following address: Darrell Wong, _____, Hawaii, USA.

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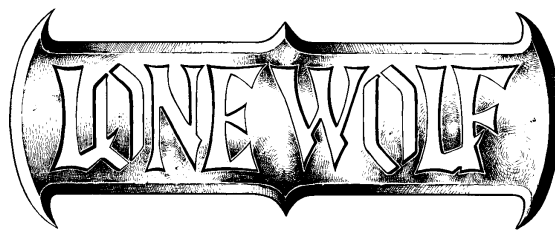
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This issue's competition is based around events and details which occur in "Mydnight's Hero"—the third episode of the Lone Wolf New Order series. All you have to do is answer the following questions correctly (neatly on a separate sheet of paper) then send it, together with your name, address, Kai rank & age, to the club at the address shown below.

All entries must be submitted no later than 12th February 1996. Any received after this date will not be counted so be sure to complete your entry and send it in as soon as possible. The winner and runners-up will be notified by post before 12th March 1996.

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1. What is the name of the Siyene High Chancellor?
2. What is the occupation of Acraban's brother?
3. Who is the Inquisitor-Major of Cavalia?
4. Who or what is a Bavazanur?
5. Where did Prince Karvas marry Amarelda?
6. In which town or village would you find Shaney Street?
7. What is the name of the Guard Captain of Varedo?
8. Who is the commander of the Lucien Province?
9. Name the shadowy organisation hired by Baron Sadanzo to murder King Oridon?
10. Who is the Autarch of Bhanar?
11. Name the tradesmen's district of Mydnight?
12. Name the crewman who was killed when the *Starstrider* crashed?
13. Who or what is Fanji?
14. Where in Siyen would you find the Golden Plough Inn?
15. What river flows through the city of Bakhasa?

Send your answer sheet (including your name, address, age) to: THE LONE WOLF CLUB (Q30),
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